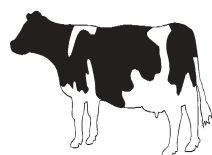


DAIRY



NEWS

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WSDA Welcomes

Assistant Director Kathryn Smith

Kathryn Smith joined WSDA in September to lead the Food Safety, Animal Health and Consumer Services Division. Kathryn Smith brings a wealth of leadership expertise from her administrator roles with the Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, and Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.

Kathryn completed her MBA degree at City University in Bellevue in September and she enjoys applying contemporary management principles in her new leadership position at WSDA.

"I am excited about the opportunity to serve the citizens of Washington at a time when food safety and animal health

"Sound public policies are critical to public confidence in the safety of the food supply."

issues are receiving national attention" Smith said. "Sound public policies are critical to public confidence in the safety of the food supply. They want information and they want to be involved in decision making, but mostly they want to trust that public employees and the food industry are working hard, each and every day, to protect the

consumer." Kathryn said she looks forward to working with Dairy Inspection Program Advisory Committee, the Dairy Commission, and other industry organizations in the ongoing efforts to instill public confidence in the work that food industries and regulatory agencies do throughout the state.

Kathryn's knowledge of public health and safety issues and her dedication to continuous quality improvement will be a positive asset to the agency in meeting the needs of Washington State's food and livestock industries in the protection of public health. Kathryn Smith replaces John Daly, who returned to WSDA last December on an interim basis until his retirement in October.

Foot and Mouth Disease Update

Submitted by Dan Jemelka DVM, MPH

In the last *Dairy News*, Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) was described and discussed as it affected Soviet States of Asia, Japan and Korea. A year later we are again faced with FMD and the devastation it produced in other areas of the globe. Since that time, it affected South America, Middle Eastern as well as European Countries, especially the United Kingdom (UK). Unlike the UK, other European countries or regions have been able to control the spread of the disease and prevent huge livestock losses.

England continues to fight FMD, although the cases have decreased significantly. As of September 30, 2001, England had 2,030 confirmed cases. No additional cases were diagnosed in October 2001. Approximately 4 million animals have been slaughtered since February 21, 2001, when the outbreak was first recognized in a slaughter establishment in lower England.

Since FMD is still occurring globally, it is only prudent that the United States prepare for an outbreak. The State Veterinarian's office in Washington state has been preparing plans to respond and mitigate an outbreak should it occur in this state. A series of FMD tabletop exercises have been hosted by the State Veterinarian's office throughout Washington for county and state Emergency Managers, law enforcement personnel, Department of Health personnel, and other county or state agencies that may be called upon for assistance if an outbreak occurs.

On October 23, in Fife Washington and October 25, in Moses Lake Washington, Dr. Mead, State Veterinarian, presented a session on FMD and discussed what the Animal Health office is doing to prepare for such an outbreak. Although the public was able to attend, livestock owners were especially invited through their livestock organizations. Veterinarians in practice and academia as well as Extension personnel were also invited. Discussion of the disease, and the emergency plans that have been developed with recommendations to livestock owners, collateral businesses, and practicing veterinarians were presented. The Veterinary Emergency Team Trailers (VETT) that were purchased to respond to an outbreak were also described.

For more information on FMD, please call the Washington State Veterinarian's office at (360) 902-1878.

Could Your Farm Be a Source of Food Poisoning?

Submitted by Gena Reich, Food Safety Supervisor

Everyone reading this article is probably well aware of the signed contracts where upon dairy farmers agree to sell all the milk they produce to their cooperative for processing into pasteurized dairy products. When raw milk is diverted at the farm bulk tank, away from the cooperative, this raises an issue of theft that is best addressed by each dairy cooperative. WSDA has a more serious concern with raw milk leaving the farm for drinking or for making fresh unpasteurized cheese.

Consuming raw milk and fresh raw milk products is dangerous because of the many pathogens that can be in the milk that will make people very sick. These germs are not detectable by sight or smell. Pathogens can be present in the milk one day and not the next because pathogen presence has to do with the health of each cow contributing milk to the bulk tank. Just as we can be contagious before we really feel the symptoms of a disease, cows shed bacteria before they show illness symptoms.

Food poisoning or foodborne illness outbreaks have been directly traceable to victims who had consumed raw milk or products made with raw milk. There are numerous disease causing pathogens that are commonly present in raw milk.

An antibiotic resistant form of *Salmonella* was the culprit in the last big raw milk related illness outbreak in the Yakima Valley. About 120 people were sick and about a third of those were hospitalized. The median age of the sick people was 4 years old, but children as young as 5 months became ill and people in their prime also became sick. It was extremely fortunate that none of these victims died, because the antibiotic resistant nature of this *Salmonella* makes the disease hard to treat. Following this outbreak, WSDA has been and continues to be a main sponsor of educational outreach to teach the dangers of consuming fresh raw milk products.

Even though *Salmonella* is a nasty disease, *Listeria monocytogenes* is much more dangerous. Last May, there was a serious outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes* among people who consumed raw milk in North Carolina. This outbreak led to some deaths from the *Listeria monocytogenes* infection. This disease particularly attacks very young and immuno-compromized persons (such as cancer patients). The deaths in North Carolina involved newborn babies who got the disease from their mother before their birth. Washington State has documented isolated cases of pre-term birth of infected babies and of spontaneous abortions that occurred after the mothers consumed raw milk products. We have not so far experienced the multiple cases composing an outbreak of this very deadly disease.

During a recent routine inspection of a Washington dairy farm, several people were observed helping themselves to milk from the raw bulk tank. Every person that was seen took at least one gallon and several took multiple gallons of milk. When approached by the WSDA Food Safety Officer, none of the people taking the milk seemed to think they were doing anything wrong or dangerous. When these people were asked

about taking the milk from the bulk tank, they said they worked on the farm and the dairy owner told them they could take some milk home.

WSDA performs random pathogen sampling of raw milk produced on farms and held in the raw milk tanks at the dairy processing plants over the last three years. The results below reveal that less than 1% of samples had *Salmonella* present in the raw milk sampled. This is good news until you consider how many people got sick even with such a low occurrence rate in our raw milk supply. Regarding *Listeria monocytogenes*, the number of positive samples found in this raw milk pathogen survey is comparatively much higher at 15%.

Raw Milk Samples Analyzed by the WSDA Microbiology Laboratory				
Year	1999	2000	2001 (1/1-10/17)	Total Samples Tested
Raw Milk Samples Tested	100	94	70	264
Number positive for <i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	14	18	8	40 (15% positive)
Number positive for <i>Salmonella Sp.</i>	1	0	1	40 (<1% positive)

Of the raw milk being taken off the farm that particular day, it's unknown how many people would have eventually drank the milk, or the number of people who would have been directly exposed to people who drank the milk. All people around a direct victim of foodborne illness are potential victims of secondary infection.

Raw milk is potentially very dangerous. Pasteurization kills all known pathogens present in the milk supply while essentially keeping the nutrition intact. WSDA does not recommend consumption of raw milk by dairy farmers and their families. However if they choose to consume raw milk or products made from raw milk, they must assume the risk of becoming ill from foodborne pathogens.

It is illegal to allow employees or other individuals to take raw milk home from a dairy farm. The milk that is produced on the farm is to be sold to the dairy cooperative, as agreed, for further processing. Any owner of a Washington dairy farm that allows raw milk to be taken off of their farm needs to understand the potential for very serious liability issues.

New systems are in place to track incidents of foodborne disease as never before. It is possible today to determine separate but related cases of illness occurring across both county and state lines. Today it is even possible to determine the specific genetic fingerprint of a disease-causing organism and link it back to the source.

**Do you really want to risk the possibility of your farm
being implicated in a foodborne illness outbreak?**

New owners at your farm? Do you have a new mailing address?

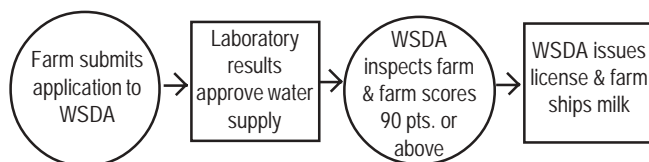
Thanks to everyone who completed and returned the information update sheet WSDA sent with the March 2001 Dairy News. Your continued communication helps WSDA maintain accurate records for the state's dairy farms. In these times of heightened security awareness, it is paramount that we know how to contact you quickly in the event of an emergency.

If you have any contact, mailing address, physical site address or other changes to report, contact:

Michelle Lucero, Dairy Office Assistant Senior
Tel. 360-902-1875 Fax. 360-902-2087
Email: mlucero@agr.wa.gov
P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560

REMEMBER: New dairy farms need to submit an application, have your water supply tested and approved, and score 90 points or above on a WSDA inspection

BEFORE you can ship milk for public consumption.
Give us a call so we can plan for your needs.



WSDA Loses Veteran Food Safety Officers

Robert Edward Soderstrom died unexpectedly on October 12, 2001. Bob was a veteran Food Safety Officer in the Southwest Washington Region and was most recently responsible for Pierce and Kitsap Counties. His expertise in dairy farm and milk plant inspections from his 23 years with the department and his genuine personality are missed at WSDA.

David Lee Bass, known by everyone at WSDA as 'Sam' retired from the agency on June 30, 2001. Sam started his career with WSDA as a Food Safety Officer in 1978. His inspection territory was Lewis, Clark, Skamania, Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties. Health conditions prompted his 'early' retirement at 75 years old. Sam would have continued working if he could because he really enjoyed his job, and he really liked the people he worked with at WSDA. It's not the same without you, Sam!

Dr. Robert Mead

Named Veterinarian of the Year

Submitted by Jodi Jones

Dr. Robert Mead was named Veterinarian of the Year at the annual convention of the state Veterinary Medical Association held in September in Yakima.

Mead has been with the Washington State Department of Agriculture for fifteen years and has served as the state veterinarian since 1988. He assumed responsibility last year for administration of the agency's Livestock Identification Program, which records livestock brands and inspects for livestock ownership at public markets.

"I was surprised; it was quite an honor to receive this award and I appreciate the Washington State Veterinary Medical Association for selecting me," Mead said when asked about the award. "I really need to acknowledge my employees in the Animal Health Program. Without them doing exceptional work for the public and the industry every day, I am sure that I would not have been considered for this great award."

"At the award's ceremony, I really accepted it on behalf of all of them as well as myself. It really is a thrill for a state program to be recognized by our peers and those that we meet and work with frequently in the regulatory context of keeping Washington's livestock healthy."

Mead has had an outstanding career in veterinary medicine since 1966 when he graduated from the University of California College of Veterinary Medicine. After graduating, he was employed by the International Pacific Fisheries Commission Research Laboratory in Cultus Lake, B.C., researching salmon and trout viruses. He then moved to Contra Costa, California, where he spent 12 years as a private equine practitioner.



Mead then moved to Spanaway to continue his private equine practice for an additional four years before he was hired at the state Dept. of Agriculture as the assistant state veterinarian. Two years later, Mead was promoted to state veterinarian.

Mead is an avid trail rider and a member of the Back Country Horsemen of Washington. He has been vice president of the Puget Sound Driving Club, a judge for the North American Trail Ride Conference, and president of the Concord-Mt. Diablo Trail Ride Association.

Jim Pressley Promoted

to Assistant Program Manager

Jim Pressley was promoted to Food Safety Assistant Program Manager in October. Jim has 26 years food safety regulatory experience with the Washington State Department of Agriculture, including 6 years as the supervisor of the South-west Washington Region.

Jim's experience as Interstate Milk Shippers State Rating Officer and in the management of the NCIMS Survey Program will be very helpful to the agency in his new position. His knowledge of federal and state food safety laws and regulations, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) methodology, administrative procedures, and rule amendment procedures are essential for his new role. Jim will also continue coordination of the Food Safety Officer Training and Standardization Program.

Congratulations Jim!

Jesernig Departs WSDA

In July, WSDA Director Jim Jesernig announced plans to leave the agency late this fall, departing a cabinet post he has held since 1993. Jesernig was first appointed to head the Department of Agriculture by former Gov. Mike Lowry and was reappointed by Gov. Gary Locke. Jim Jesernig's last day with WSDA was Nov. 30, 2001.

"Jim has been a great advocate for farmers, ranchers and the entire agricultural community," said Gov. Locke. "Jim has worked diligently to remind government at all levels and the general public about the importance of agriculture as the foundation of this state's economy."

During his tenure at the Department of Agriculture, Jesernig has worked vigorously to support the agricultural community. He has fought for budgets that supported critical department activities and the marketing of Washington's diverse crops and has worked with interest groups and all levels of government to help shape policies that affect the state's agricultural industry.

Jesernig will be joining the Perkins Coie law firm in Olympia, working on public policy issues. Perkins Coie, headquartered in Seattle, is the Northwest's largest law firm with more than 500 lawyers serving clients from offices throughout the United States and Asia.

Source: WSDA News Release, July 27, 2001

WSDA Hires New Food Safety Officers

The WSDA Food Safety Program recruited top candidates to fill Food Safety Officer positions vacated by retirements and promotions over the past several months. From L to R: Cathryn Groehnert, Nancy Byers, John Leerhoff and Rob Eastman.



Photo by Doug Brown

Visit WSDA websites for regulations and licensing information:

Food Safety Program

www.wa.gov/agr/fsah/food/FS-HP.htm

Organic Food Program

www.wa.gov/agr/fsah/organic/offp.htm

Animal Health & Livestock ID Program

[www.wa.gov/agr/fsah/animal/
animal%20health.htm](http://www.wa.gov/agr/fsah/animal/animal%20health.htm)

Animal Feed Program

www.wa.gov/agr/pmd/feeds/index.htm

DAIRY NEWS -- This newsletter is published by the Washington State Department of Agriculture's Food Safety Program to foster a better understanding and harmony between the Department and its dairy farmer constituents by informing them of current issues and policies and, to solicit their input and constructive criticisms. For more information contact Claudia Coles, Food Safety Program Manager, at (360) 902-1905 or at PO Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560. Inquiries regarding availability of this publication in alternative formats should be directed to the WSDA Food Safety Program at (360) 902-1875 or TDD at (360) 902-1996.